REMARKS

Reconsideration of the present application is respectfully solicited in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Claims 1, 3, 10 and 12 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Gortz et al. (U.S. 6,629,183). It is the Examiner's assertion that the operational control units in Gortz are "freely arrangeable with respect to the slots of the holding device" as defined by the present invention. This is entirely incorrect and demonstrates a complete misunderstanding of the Gortz et al. reference.

The "operational control units" in the present invention, as described in the Specification at page 7, lines 16-20, comprise "for example a rotary push button 28, a simple rotary switch 13, a keypad 32, or a switch 34…". In other words, the operational control units 20 correspond to the various human interface input devices and their associated control circuitry 41 (Fig. 2). In Gortz et al., the operational control units correspond to input devices 12.1 (keypad), 12.2 (microphone), 12.3 (video camera) and their associated A/D circuits 26.

Claim 1 further defines "a holding unit with a number of operational control slots each adapted to receive one of the operational control units." No such holding device is shown anywhere in Gortz et al. However, it is fair to assume that something must be provided for mounting devices 12.1, 12.2 and 12.3 to facilitate connection to interface circuit 14, and for the sake of argument, Applicants will even concede that these devices are mounted in something equivalent to the recited "operational control slots".

By no means, however, are the devices 12.1, 12.2 and 12.3 in Gortz et al. "freely arrangeable with respect to the slots" as expressly recited in claim 1. In particular,

keyboard 12.1 must be connected to the tactile driver interface 21, microphone 12.2 must be connected to the audio driver interface 22, and video camera 12.3 must be connected to the video driver interface 23. These connections are most definitely NOT freely interchangeable as required by claim 1. There is absolutely nothing in Gortz et al. to suggest that these input devices (12.1-12.3) can be interchangeably connected to the interface circuit 14. The "adaptability" discussed in Gortz et al. refers to the ability of the interface circuit 14 to be used with various application units (designated 11.1, 11.i-11.n in Fig. 2), such as a navigation system, a mobile phone, or a safety monitoring system. As stated at col. 6, lines 52-60 of Gortz et al.:

> "Thus, according to the invention it is possible with the aid of the interface device for any desired application unit such as, for example, a navigation system, a mobile telephone, a vehicle operating and safety monitoring system or the like to be connected to the respectively available input/output means without the need to change the input/output interfaces of the application units 11. All that is required is to store the information required to operate a unit interface in the storage device 15."

In other words, the Gortz et al. system allows different application units to be connected (via the interface circuit 14) to the same human interface input/output devices 12.1-12.3 and 13.1-13.2. However, nowhere does Gortz et al. teach that the physical location of the various input/output devices within the different receiving slots is freely interchangeable.

Thus, Gortz et al. clearly does not anticipate, nor render obvious claims 1, 3, 10 and 12. The change to the wording of claim 1 is intended to emphasize this fundamental difference between the claimed invention and Gortz et al. and not for the purpose of altering the scope of the claim.

Additionally, with respect to dependent claim 3 and independent claim 12, the Examiner cites the passages at col. 2, lines 61-64 and col. 4, lines 13-14, as supporting the position that Gortz et al. teaches wireless (e.g., optical or radio frequency) communication between the operational control units and the receiving units in the control device. Again, the Examiner is wholly misinterpreting the disclosure in Gortz et al.

In the present application, claims 3-5, and 12-14 define a wireless communication link between the operational control units 20 and the control device 62. The cited passages in the Gortz et al. reference are merely referring to the different optical and acoustic input devices (i.e. video camera 12.3 and microphone 12.2) that may be used. There is absolutely nothing in Gortz et al. to suggest that the control signals from the input/output devices 12.1-12.3 and 13.1-13.2 are transmitted wirelessly to the interface circuit 14. In fact, there is no disclosure in Gortz et al. of the wireless communication of control signals anywhere in the entire system diagram shown in Fig. 2. The only wireless communication in Gortz et al. is between the input/output devices 12.2-12.3 and 13.1-13.2 and the user.

Moreover, this further deficiency in Gortz et al. is not obviated by the additional citations to Weisshaar et al. (U.S. 6,947,760) and Remes et al. (U.S. 4,366,482) combined with Gortz et al. by the Examiner to reject claims 4, 5, 8, 13 and 14 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). Weisshaar merely discloses a method of optimizing the transmission of data in a wireless communication network. However, it does not refer to a driver information system used in vehicles nor does it describe operational control units with an optical transmission capability. Similarly, the Remes et al. reference merely

discloses the possibility of transmitting data via radio frequency signals. Remes et al. does not disclose the transmission of radio frequency signals from an operational control unit to an operating device in a driver information system.

Accordingly, claims 4, 5, 8, 13 and 14 are clearly patentable over the cited art. Again, the further language added herein to claims 3, 4, and 12-14 is intended to further emphasize this distinction over the cited art and not for the purpose of altering the scope of the claims, as the controls signals are already defined in the claims as the signals transmitted between the operational control units and the control device.

Finally, newly presented dependent claims 15-18 add the feature described in the second paragraph of page 11 of the application.

All of pending claims 1, 3-5, and 7-18 are therefore believed to be in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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